



# War without Violence: Leveraging the Arab Spring to Win the War on Terrorism

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# War without Violence: Leveraging the Arab Spring to Win the War on Terrorism

## **Author Biography**

Pat Proctor is a U.S. Army field artillery lieutenant colonel with over seventeen years' active service. In 2007, he served in Iraq as a member of the Joint Strategic Assessment Team under General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker, mapping the future for post-surge Iraq. Colonel Proctor is currently deployed to eastern Afghanistan as the chief of plans for the First Infantry Division. He is the author of *Task Force Patriot and the End of Combat Operations in Iraq*. He holds master's degrees in military arts and sciences for strategy and theater operations from the U.S. Command and General Staff College and the School of Advanced Military Studies, respectively. He is a doctoral candidate in history at Kansas State University. Colonel Proctor's recent publications include "Message versus Perception during the Americanization of the Vietnam War," *The Historian* (Spring 2011); "Fighting to Understand: A Practical Example of Design at the Battalion Level," *Military Review* (March–April 2011); and "The Mythical Shia Crescent," *Parameters* (Spring 2008) and *Iran International Times*, May 23, 2008.

## **Abstract**

After a decade of war, the United States has failed to eradicate the threat of salafist jihadism. No matter how hard it tries, the United States cannot kill its way to victory in the war on terrorism. Sweeping changes across the Middle East—dubbed the "Arab Spring" by the media—have presented the West with a unique opportunity to pursue an alternative approach. Rather than engaging in war (politics through violence), the United States should engage in mass politics (war without violence) to compel the Arab world to reject the salafist jihadism idea. This article proposes a strategy calibrated to defeat international terrorism without unnecessarily antagonizing non-jihadist salafists and political salafists who enjoy broad-based support in the Arab world. The article goes on to identify key political figures already espousing elements of this counternarrative, and it describes the methods the United States should use to empower these and other anti-salafist jihadism activists.

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## Abstract

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## Introduction

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the United States faces a new kind of threat that defies the overwhelming military might that has made the United States the world's sole remaining superpower. This threat began as an idea, *salafism*, which typifies the yearning of a people to return to a mythical "golden age" of Islam. This idea in turn inspired a holy war, a *jihad*, against the West.<sup>1</sup> Salafist jihadism was the foundation of a global

terrorist network that launched a wave of terrorist violence culminating in the attacks in New York and Washington, DC, on September 11, 2001. When the United States responded with overwhelming military force against the heart of this network in Afghanistan, salafist jihadism metasized into an even more difficult problem, a global movement that continued a wave of terrorist violence across Europe and the Muslim world.<sup>2</sup>

Only days after the September 11 attacks, in a speech before a joint session of Congress, President George W. Bush declared a "global war on terror,"<sup>3</sup> yet, after a decade of war, the United States has failed to eradicate the threat of salafist jihadism. Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz wrote, "War is ... an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will,"<sup>4</sup> yet, no matter how hard it tries, the United States cannot kill its way to victory in this war. There is simply no government to force to capitulate. Moreover, the population that must be compelled to abandon salafist jihadism is so vast and spread over such a large area that the level of violence required is beyond both the United States' capacity and its will. In short, this threat defies war as a solution.

The United States needs an alternative way to persuade the Muslim world to reject the salafist jihadism idea. Fortunately, communist revolutionary Chairman Mao Zedong has provided a useful corollary to Clausewitz: "Politics is war without [violence]."<sup>5</sup> The United States needs to engage in politics, mass politics, with the people of the Arab world to compel them to reject salafist jihadism as a path to overcome perceived Western domination and to help them achieve individual freedom.

Sweeping changes across the Middle East that had nothing to do with the war on terrorism have presented the West with a unique opportunity to pursue this alternative. For example, Arab youth, fed up with the lack of opportunity and political liberties in their country, poured into the streets of Tunisia in a revolution that toppled President Zine el Abidine bin Ali's twenty-three-year-old regime. Weeks later, in February 2011, throngs of Egyptian protestors toppled the thirty-year-old regime of President Hosni Mubarak.<sup>6</sup> This tectonic shift—the overthrow of the political order of the most populous country in the Arab world—generated a tsunami that washed over the Middle East. Protestors poured into the streets of Algeria, Libya, Bahrain, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. Even countries as far away as China and Venezuela felt the aftershocks. This wave of change, dubbed the "Arab Spring" by the media, has presented an appealing opportunity to reshape the Muslim world.

## The Salafist Jihadism Idea

In the final days of Islamic independence, before the great powers of Europe ultimately carved up and colonized the Arab world, a word began to emerge to describe the humiliation Islam was suffering at the hands of the West. Scholars debate its first use; there is disagreement as to whether it arrived with the British domination of Sudan beginning in the late nineteenth century or in the aftermath of World War I. However, from the Maghreb (North Africa) to Mesopotamia, Arabs began using the word *ista'mar* to describe their predicament. Alternately translated as "to colonize" or "to exploit," the word became synonymous with the—at times—brutal domination of the Arab world by the West.<sup>7</sup>

The struggle to defeat the *ista'mar* has fueled a succession of ideologies among the Arabs; as such, salafism is only one in a host of ideologies that have vied for dominance as a solution to the *ista'mar*. From the Arabic word *salafī*, meaning "ancestors" or "earlier generations," salafism harkens back to a mythical "golden age" of Islam in its purest form, as practiced by the Prophet and his Companions, the *Sahaba*.<sup>8</sup>

Muhammad ibn Abd-al-Wahhab, founder of Wahhabism, in the early eighteenth century, was the father of modern salafism. He earned the patronage of Sheikh Muhammad ibn Saud in 1740 when Saud promised to support the spread of Wahhabism in exchange for political support. This alliance persisted through the generations of conflict that finally saw the Saud family take over the entirety of the Nejd and Hejaz (the Arabian Peninsula).<sup>9</sup> More importantly, however, the Saudis had managed to maintain true independence from the West, one of the only states in the Arab world not under the yoke of the *ista'mar*.

These first salafists had sought purer personal and community practice of Islam as a religion. Yet their goal, even before the concept of the *ista'mar* had crystallized in the Arab mind, was a return to the former glory of the Islamic Empire. The salafists held that the Islamic world could only return to this age by a return to strict adherence to the faith as it was practiced by the first generation of Muslims, especially the *Sahaba*.<sup>10</sup>

After the First World War, at the same time that Arab nationalism was taking shape in Egypt, salafism reemerged and began to evolve. This new strain of salafism that emerged from the intellectual class in Egypt in the 1920s was political salafism—the idea that, to defeat the *ista'mar*, the state must reject modernism and reorder Arab governments and societies as prescribed by the Quran.<sup>11</sup>

In 1928, political salafism spawned a political party, the Society of Muslim Brothers (more commonly known as the Muslim Brotherhood). Its ideology is detailed in Sayyid Qutb's seminal work, *Ma'alim fil-Tariq (Signposts along the Road)*. In it, he laid out both the faults of Western modernism and the principles (but not the form) of an ideal political salafist society. In *Signposts*, Qutb called for the Islamic world to reject modernism and its Western-style political structures as *Jahiliyyah*, a pejorative referring to the Arabs' pre-Quranic, pagan practices. Qutb condemned both communist and democratic government as *Jahiliyyah*.<sup>12</sup> Instead, Qutb insisted, Islam should return to a society as dictated by the Quran, under the power of the shari'a, Islamic law.<sup>13</sup>

In the 1980s, in the mujahideen training camps of the Soviet-Afghan war, political salafist ideology met Pakistani jihadism, forged over more than a century of conflict with both British colonial rule and Indian Hindu nationalism. When these ideologies met, they metastasized into something new.<sup>14</sup> Political salafist Usama bin Laden, educated in a Saudi university by Muslim Brothers and immersed in Pakistani jihadism during the Soviet-Afghan war, was a vessel for this blend of ideologies.

As the jihad in Afghanistan ended, ibn Laden saw Western troops in his homeland of Saudi Arabia preparing to deal humiliation to Arab Iraq. Even more outrageous, the old salafists—the Wahhabi clerics—supported the Saudi king's decision.<sup>15</sup> This completed his rejection of the Wahhabists' brand of salafism (focused on individual living and practice of Islam). After ibn Laden was exiled by the Saudis, he drifted into the orbit of fellow—former mujahideen Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was leading a political salafist insurgency in his home country of Egypt, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Together, they concluded that the insurgencies of political salafism were not sufficient to overcome the *ista'mar*. They could never overturn the authority of apostate regimes in the Middle East until they first removed the far enemy, the Western regimes that fueled the *ista'mar*. The jihad, they decided, should be exported to the West and especially to the United States, the sole remaining superpower.

This marked a new evolutionary step in salafist ideology: salafist jihadism. The defeat of the *ista'mar* and return to the greatness of Islam's golden age could only come about by: strict adherence to Islam as practiced by the *Sahaba* in the days of the Prophet; rejection of the *Jahiliyyah* of Western modernism and its political structures; and a jihad prosecuted by every Muslim.<sup>16</sup> But salafist jihadism went one critical step further: the jihad should be taken out of the Islamic world, directly to the West, in the form of international terrorism. This is the *raison d'être* of al-Qaida, the standard-bearer of the salafist jihadism ideology.

## The Promise of the Arab Spring

As of 2008, nearly 65 percent of the population of the Arab world was under the age of thirty. This "youth bulge," constituting both the labor and the intellectual class, embodies the demographic and economic future of the Arab world.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, this majority is denied political power by not one but two powerful forces. On the one hand, many Arab youth believe that the manifestation of the *ista'mar* in their countries via Western-backed authoritarian regimes unjustly represses them. On the other hand, the salafist jihadist movement accompanied by the threat of totalitarian rule continuously smothers the hope of mass political participation. This instability has brought the Arab world to a tipping point. Without a singular, unifying ideology, the "Arab street" on its own is overcoming the *ista'mar*, one of the chief obstacles that has prevented them from achieving individual political power. The challenge for the West now is to quickly turn this fervor into a movement that will also defeat the other obstacle to their individual political power, salafist jihadism.

Salafist jihadism is an ideology, an idea that has mobilized a global movement. The United States has tried to use warfare to defeat this idea and has failed. An idea can only be defeated by another idea. The United States must first identify the elements of this counter-idea, an "anti" salafist jihadism idea that is intended to counter all of salafist jihadism (that is to say salafist-inspired jihadism). Such an idea must be generated within and propagated by the Arab world in order to be effective. After the United States has identified where this idea might gain a foothold, it must move quickly, while new political orders are still forming in the Middle East, to forge new, national anti salafist jihadism movements in each Arab country in the region.

As will be shown in a moment, the anti salafist jihadism idea has existed in the Arab world for years, as have elements of these national anti salafist jihadism movements. But, until recently, the authoritarian Western-backed regimes of the prerevolution Arab world limited political power in the government to the oligarchy and brutally repressed activism among the people. This is where the Arab Spring phenomenon offers an opportunity that has never existed before, the opportunity to build national anti salafist jihadist movements—with influence—within the government, the media, and the people of their respective countries. With these regimes now overthrown, the future of each government is an open question. The people of these countries are already mobilized and, for the first time, free to express their opinions and responsive to activism. The U.S. government, with the help of the international community and anti salafist jihadist activists, must foster new national movements in these countries.

Building the government wing of a national anti salafist jihadist movement in a country like Egypt, Tunisia, or Libya, where the governments has already been unseated, or in a country like Syria, where the armed rebellion against the regime is ongoing, involves empowering those willing to embrace anti-salafist jihadism. First, the U.S. must use diplomatic and intelligence means to identify those individuals. Once they are identified, a combination of money and preferred access to U.S. representatives and business opportunities can be used to empower them through a combination of public diplomacy and covert means, all of which will vary in each country according to its unique conditions. In countries like Syria, where an armed struggle continues, covert or overt military assistance, in the form of military hardware, training, or even air or drone strikes can be used to weight the outcome in favor of leaders who embrace the anti salafist jihadist idea. This method will also work to a lesser degree in countries like Bahrain, where governments are currently engaged in armed suppression of anti-government demonstrations in their countries.

The United States can also foster the development of activism by national anti salafist jihadism movements. Using the public diplomacy tools currently present in U.S. embassies across the Arab world, the U.S. State Department can empower activists with Internet access to spread the anti salafist jihadism idea within their own countries.<sup>18</sup> These same tools can be used to train national anti salafist jihadist activists in the use of new media like blogs and social media such as Facebook and Twitter to call other young Arabs to activism. Through partnership with U.S.-based media, the U.S. government can also publicize national anti salafist jihadist activists and bring international attention to their activities. Finally, as has been the practice since the beginning of the War on Terrorism, the U.S. government should, through diplomacy and economic incentives, continue to encourage allied Muslim countries inside and outside the Arab world to oppose salafist jihadism. However, with the advent of new anti salafist jihadist movements, these regimes should be encouraged to support this activism. Because it will be focused on encouraging opposition to salafist jihadism rather than the spread of democratic freedom, Arab governments (equally threatened by salafist jihadism) may be eager to support activism of this kind. They could do so by encouraging the pan-Arab networks in their countries to favorably cover these movements, giving activists access to Internet and other communication means, and providing money to support their activities.

While the countries that have been transformed by the Arab Spring are the most susceptible to the development of national anti salafist jihadist movements, that does not mean that national movements in other countries are not possible. For example, nearly nine years in Iraq has given the



United States a very close relationship with figures in both the media and the government. Iraqi media already provides a strong anti salafist jihadist media wing. Sunni Arab reconciliationists currently serving in the Iraqi government, who have already stood up to al-Qaida in Iraq to participate in the Iraqi political process, could form the core of an Iraqi anti salafist jihadist political wing. Similarly, the *al Sawah* (Awakening movement) sheikhs, with both the military power of their Sons of Iraq (Sunni militias first sponsored by the United States during the Iraq "surge") and the social legitimacy of their status as tribal sheikhs, have risked their lives to demonstrate that they reject salafist jihadism. They could serve as members of either the political or activist wing of an anti salafist jihadist movement.

Despite the Arab Spring, some countries in the Arab world have remained authoritarian. Monarchies like Saudi Arabia and Jordan and emirates like the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, to varying degrees, already support anti salafist jihadism. They also, to varying degrees, have tightly controlled media that could be directed to reinforce the anti salafist jihadism idea. And, of course, these regimes could force their people out into the streets in support of any agenda, including anti salafist jihadism. However, in some respects, fostering movements in these countries can be counterproductive. People in these countries are savvy—a necessity of survival under brutal regimes. They will no doubt see anti salafist jihadism as an artificially generated movement. People resentful of their regime and prone to blame the West for their regime's longevity are likely to see anti salafist jihadism as just another affront of the *ista'mar*. Pressing anti salafist jihadism in these countries might actually have the unintended effect of strengthening the case for salafist jihadism.

## The Anti Salafist Jihadism Idea

So far, this article has discussed how national anti salafist jihadist movements could be formed. But movements form around an idea. The heart of a mass-political approach to defeating salafist jihadism must be an idea. First and foremost, this idea must come from the Arab world, the population targeted by the salafist jihadism idea. In fact, as will be shown in a moment, the seeds of an idea already exist and are being expressed by prominent figures throughout the Arab world. These advocates just need functioning anti salafist jihadist media wings to propagate their ideas and strong political and activist wings to exploit their success.

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What does an anti salafist jihadism idea look like? Military theorist David Galula, in his book *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, generalizes his observations from the French counterinsurgency in Algeria to produce a theory of insurgency and counterinsurgency warfare. For Galula, a key element of insurgency is the *cause*, a political idea that drives the movement. Galula felt that a cause (or idea) and its representative insurgency (or movement) must proceed from a political problem. Galula asks, "What is a political problem?" He then responds:

"It is 'an unsolved contradiction,' according to Mao Tse-tung. If one accepts this definition, then a political cause is the championing of one side of the contradiction. In other words, where there is no problem, there is no cause, but there are always problems in any country."<sup>19</sup>

Galula goes on to list four different "natures" of a problem:

1. The problem may be essentially political, related to the national or international situation of the country....
2. The problem may be social, as when one class is exploited by another or denied any possibility of improving its lot....
3. The problem may be economic, such as the low price of agricultural products in relation to industrial goods, or the low price of raw material in relation to finished products, or the import of foreign goods rather than the development a national industry....
4. The problem may even be artificial as long as it has a chance to be accepted as a fact.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, Galula tells the reader:

"It is not absolutely necessary that the problem be acute, although the insurgent's work is facilitated if such is the case. If the problem is merely latent, the first task of the insurgent is to make it acute by 'raising the political consciousness of the masses.'"<sup>21</sup>

Thus a problem, the progenitor of a cause, is a political, social, economic, or artificial contradiction in a society that is either acute or made acute by a movement.

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The problem for the anti salafist jihadism idea must be salafist jihadism itself—a political, social, and economic problem. Salafist jihadism is an international political problem because it empowers the movement, al-Qaida, to act as a destructive independent, non-state actor on the international stage, provoking a violent response from the West. Salafist jihadism is a social problem because it fosters a violent, nihilistic, clandestine subculture that threatens social order both inside and outside the Muslim world. Salafist jihadism is an economic problem, first, in that it impedes investment in the areas where it is strongest, and second, in that the attacks it inspires cause economic damage both in the initial destruction and in the security measures and lost growth that follow.

If salafist jihadism is the problem, what then is the anti salafist jihadist idea that seeks to solve this problem? There are, Galula says, four "strategic criteria for a cause [or idea]":

1. The best cause for the insurgent's purpose is one that, by definition, can attract the largest number of supporters and repel the minimum of opponents....
2. The insurgent must, of course, be able to identify himself totally with the cause or, more precisely, with the entire majority of the population theoretically attracted by it....
3. To be perfectly sound, the cause must be such that the counterinsurgent cannot espouse it too or can do so only at the risk of losing his power, which is, after all, what he is fighting for....
4. A cause, finally, must also be lasting, if not for the duration of the revolutionary war, at least until the insurgent movement is well on its feet.<sup>22</sup>

For a cause (i.e. idea) to be viable as the foundation for a political movement, it must be broad, uniquely identified with the movement's organization, and sufficient to carry the movement to its goal.

The anti salafist jihadism idea must meet David Galula's four "strategic requirements" for an idea.<sup>23</sup> An anti salafist jihadism idea must be uniquely identifiable with the anti salafist jihadist movement. The idea must also be shaped such that it cannot be co-opted by the salafist jihadist movement. The anti salafist jihadism idea must have sufficient longevity to carry it to its ultimate goal—destruction of the salafist jihadism idea.

The idea must be structured in a way that gives it broad-based appeal and, even more important, avoid arguments against salafism and political salafism that will alienate some in the Arab world and narrow its appeal.

This final point must be emphasized. An anti salafist jihadism idea must be precisely targeted. Salafist jihadism shares arguments and principles with salafism and political salafism, ideas with broad-based appeal in the Arab world. The anti salafist jihadism idea must be calibrated to attack and destroy only the unwanted behavior of the salafist jihadist movement—international terrorism—without inadvertently and unnecessarily challenging those aspects it shares with salafism or political salafism. The West frequently has difficulty distinguishing between salafist jihadism and its predecessors, and is frequently led astray by distractions like political salafism's anti-democratic political structure and brutality toward women. While these themes resonate with Western audiences, they are counterproductive when communicating to those in the Arab world who are already disillusioned with Western-style secular democracy and reject gender equality. Seeking democracy and women's rights in the Arab world, while a noble goal, is a large part of the reason that the United States is still fighting the war on terrorism after more than ten years. These issues must be set aside until salafist jihadism is defeated.

The core of any idea is a principle. Because the anti salafist jihadism idea seeks to avoid challenging salafism and political salafism, its principle must be nuanced. Rather than directly challenge the salafist jihadist principle that the *Sahaba* (the Companions of the Prophet) hold the key to perfect freedom (a principle salafist jihadism shares with salafism and political salafism), anti salafist jihadism's principle must directly oppose the undesirable behavior of salafist jihadists that separates them from salafists and political salafists: international terrorism. The principle of the anti salafist jihadism idea must be that international terrorism is wrong. This directly opposes the undesired behavior of the salafist jihadist movement without passing judgment on the rightness of Islam as it was practiced by the *Sahaba*.

Surrounding the core principle of an idea are arguments. These are assertions or claims that support the principle. Philosophy, particularly logic and rhetoric, provides some insights into the structure of arguments. Stephen Toulmin, in 1958, proposed what has come to be known as the Toulmin Model for the construction of arguments. In his model, a claim (i.e., principle) is supported by a hierarchy of arguments. Each order of argument provides the basis for the order of arguments below it.<sup>24</sup> These orders are (from highest to lowest order):

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1. Meta-principles. These highest-order arguments are generally unspoken because they are accepted by everyone. These are foundational beliefs that the audience holds.
2. Backing-warrant arguments. Backings are statements that should be accepted by everyone because they are derived from meta-principles. Each supports a warrant, which is a normative (i.e. prescriptive) statement made about the claim—a principle that applies to the specific situation.
3. Ground-reason arguments. Grounds are hard data about the situation, observable facts. Each reason is an opinion statement supported by at least one ground.
4. Counterargument-rebuttal arguments. In defending a claim, one might raise possible counterarguments against the claim and then rebut each counterargument. These rebuttals might take the form of backing-warrant or ground-reason arguments.<sup>25</sup>

Collectively, all of these arguments should lead inexorably to the claim (or principle) and exclude all other possible conclusions.

The arguments of the anti salafist jihadism idea should be designed to counter the arguments that support international terrorism. However, they do not need to be direct counterarguments to salafist jihadism arguments. In fact, it is better if they are not, as that will unnecessarily bring anti salafist jihadism into conflict with salafism and political salafism, which share many arguments with salafist jihadism. Rather, they should be backing-warrant arguments, arguments derived from meta-principles that the Arab world nearly universally accepts.<sup>26</sup> To be most effective, the anti salafist jihadism idea should use arguments based on the same meta-principles used by the salafist jihadism idea to arrive at contradictory conclusions.

Fortunately, the United States does not have to engineer these arguments itself. They are already being made by prominent personalities in the Arab world. For instance, Muslim scholar Sheikh Yusuf al Qaradawi, a political salafist Muslim Brother and Egyptian-born Qatari, is very well known for his talk show on al Jazeera, *ash Shariah wal Hayat* ("Shar'ia and Life"), and his website, IslamOnline.net. He has a great deal of influence across the Arab world, drawing an audience as large as forty million with his television show. He also has credibility as a Muslim Brother; in 2004 he turned down the job of leader of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. He also has credibility within the Arab Spring; he was a frequent speaker at

demonstrations in Egypt's Tahrir Square and issued a *fatwa* live on his television program demanding that the Libyan Army kill their President, Col. Muammar Qaddafi.<sup>27</sup> He also has credibility as a stalwart opponent of the *ista'mar*. He has repeatedly defended the right of Iraqis to fight a resistance against occupying U.S. forces.

More germane to this discussion, however, al Qaradawi has made a core argument of the anti salafist jihadist idea. He has repeatedly argued on his television show and website and in his writings and press conferences that the kidnapping and killing of civilians is forbidden by Islam. For instance, in response to the kidnapping of Italian and French aid workers in Iraq, he said, "Islam deals strictly with such a matter of bloodshed. It forbids the killing of innocent people who have nothing to do with wars."<sup>28</sup> For similar reasons, he condemned the 9/11 attacks against the United States. In condemning the kidnapping of two Austrians by al-Qaida in North Africa, he explained on his television show that kidnapping civilians is wrong because "they have no guilt. They are innocent civilians used to punish others or apply pressure on them. In Islam people are only responsible for what they do individually."<sup>29</sup> These related arguments all rely on the same meta-principles as the arguments of the salafist jihadism idea, the absolute authority of Allah and the rightness of shar'ia and the *Hadith* (the sayings and examples from the life of the Prophet and the *Sahaba*).

Another anti salafist jihadism argument also originates with a prominent figure in the Arab world. Imam-e-Kaaba Abdul Rahman Ibn Abdul Aziz as Sudais is the imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, the holiest site in Islam. As such, he is a very well-known and influential figure in the Muslim world. He was named the Dubai International Holy Quran Award's (DIHQA) ninth Islamic Personality of the Year in 2005. His recitations of the Quran, free for download from the Internet, are also extremely popular. He even has a presence on Facebook "liked" by over five thousand people. As Sudais also has considerable credibility for his opposition to the *ista'mar*; he has repeatedly preached from the Grand Mosque against the peace process with Israel. Unfortunately, his rhetoric is also laced with racism; for instance, in one sermon he called Jews "the scum of the human race, the rats of the world, the violators of pacts and agreements, the murderers of the prophets, and the offspring of apes and pigs."<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, as the imam of the most important mosque in Islam, deep in the heart of Saudi Arabia, he is a pillar of the salafist Wahhabist clerical community that underwrites the Saudi regime and wields considerable influence that could be leveraged against the idea of salafist jihadism.

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Most notable for a future anti salafist jihadist movement, however, as Sudais argues against the legitimacy of al-Qaida's jihad. In 2007, as Sudais told a gathering in Pakistan that Muslims should work collectively rather than fighting individually or creating divisions in Islam. He added, "No individual can or has the right to declare and wage jihad." He has also condemned terrorism as a tactic, saying in a sermon from the Grand Mosque, "We remind those that still sympathize, or harbor [terrorists] that they are committing a crime against their religion, their nation and their country."<sup>31</sup> Like al Qardawi's arguments, these arguments are also backing-warrant arguments, based on the same Islamic meta-principles as the salafist jihadism idea.

These are just two prominent figures—one a political salafist Muslim Brother the other a salafist Wahhabist—who make arguments that support the anti salafist jihadism idea. There are many, many more from within both communities, as well as from the secular moderate community, who make similar arguments. Their voices could serve to turn the Arab world, including those who support salafism or political salafism, away from the salafist jihadism idea.

Just as the salafist jihadism idea has benefits from the telecommunications age, the anti salafist jihadism idea must also leverage twenty-first century technology. Like the salafist jihadism idea, anti salafist jihadism can propagate through the mass communications of sympathetic "mainstream" salafists and political salafists by using figures from those movements to make its arguments. In fact, as shown above, anti salafist jihadism is already doing this. By harnessing the energy of the leaders of the Arab Spring in those countries where it has borne fruit, the anti salafist jihadist movement can compete with the salafist jihadists on the Internet as well.

Because it will have the legitimacy and official support that the salafist jihadist movement lacks, the anti salafist jihadist movement will also be able to transmit its idea through a variety of other means unavailable to salafist jihadists. In fact, the idea is already being transmitted through these means. Since 2004, the United States has paid Bell Pottinger, a British advertising firm, to run anti-terrorism and anti-sectarian violence commercials on satellite television stations across Iraq.<sup>32</sup> The highly effective campaign was a major factor in turning Sunni Arabs against al-Qaida in Iraq during the surge. In 2006, an advertising campaign under the banner "Terrorism Has No Religion" began broadcasting on pan-Arab satellite channels like al Arabiya across the Arab world. It is unclear who sponsored the campaign, but at least the initial advertisement, showing a suicide bomber blowing himself up in a marketplace, killing women and

children, was filmed by a California studio (fueling speculation that the ad campaign was a U.S. government effort). The 2004 movie *The Martyr* is just one of a number of independent films originating in the Middle East that confront terrorism.<sup>33</sup> Thus far, all of these efforts have been rudimentary, tainted by the involvement of the *ista'mar*. But they do illustrate the potential of the anti salafist jihadism idea to fill mainstream Arab media spaces that the salafist jihadist movement cannot. Similar efforts initiated and executed by national anti salafist jihadism movements could be exponentially more effective.

Admittedly, surgically targeting the undesired behavior encouraged by the salafist jihadism idea while avoiding challenging the widely supported salafism and political salafism ideas also creates a problematic unintended consequence. Seeking out and supporting prominent political salafists to carry the anti salafist jihadist message will inevitably empower political salafists. The *raison d'être* of the Muslim Brotherhood and other political salafist movements is to bring down secular, Western-backed regimes. In practice, the political salafists' alternative is Taliban-style totalitarianism. In the process of defeating salafist jihadism, the U.S. may be condemning more countries to the same fate as post-Soviet Afghanistan. Yet, this is—and always has been—a choice for the Arab world to make; fretting over the final political form of the Middle East is yet another reason the United States is still embroiled in the war on terrorism after a decade.

Likewise, this anti salafist jihadism idea is not without its inherent contradictions. While the anti salafist jihadism idea outlined here prohibits support to international terrorism, it is silent on the subject of defensive jihad, fighting the infidel in Muslim lands. In other words, while the anti salafist jihadism idea does prohibit terrorism in Western lands and the killing of civilians anywhere, it does not explicitly prohibit attacks against the West inside the Muslim world. Attacks like those against the USS *Cole* and Khobar Towers, which targeted U.S. military personnel in Muslim lands, would still theoretically be permitted. Moreover, the anti salafist jihadism idea is also silent on the subject of political salafist insurgencies like the Taliban's insurgency in Afghanistan or al-Qaida in the Maghreb's insurgency in Algeria, as long as those insurgencies target police and military forces rather than civilians. Of course, if the United States and its allies extricate themselves from the war in Afghanistan, much of the case for defensive jihad would evaporate, at least in that nation.



## Conclusion

The Arab Spring provides a unique opportunity not just to reshape the political landscape of the Arab world, but also to inoculate the region against the insidious disease of salafist jihadism that has hijacked Western strategic thinking for the past decade. The United States and its allies must extricate themselves from the remaining military engagements of the war on terrorism. But, at the same time, the United States must also find and empower the voices within the Arab world that are already expressing a powerful and appealing anti salafist jihadism idea. Only then can the West move beyond shoring up despotic regimes and toward real engagement with the people of the Middle East.

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